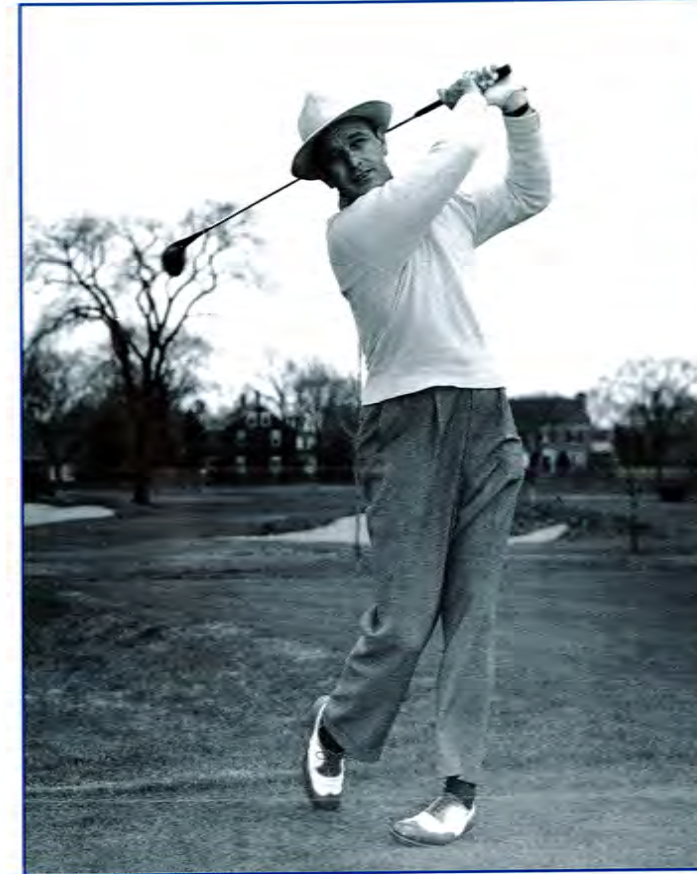


RIGA NEWS

Newsletter of the Rhode Island Golf Association

BOB KOSTEN - A TRUE CHAMPION

by Joe Sprague, Jr.



never be matched. For starters, Bob went 20-0 in match play during his first two years in Rhode Island, winning both the State Amateur and New England Amateur Championships in 1952 and '53.

Back to the Beginning

Bob Kosten was born in Grand Rapids, Michigan in 1915, and he got his start in golf as a caddy. He took to golf very quickly, and by the time he was 14 Bob was shooting in the mid-70's and being heralded in the local newspaper as a rising star. In 1932 he was runner-up in the Grand Rapids Municipal Championship. Later that summer Bob made it to the semi-finals of the Michigan State Amateur and set an amateur course record in the process.

Just when the local golfing establishment began to take notice of this high school kid who could shoot low numbers, Bob decided to turn pro to be the assistant to his brother, Lee, who was the head pro at a local club. It was a venture that only lasted a couple of years, and Bob eventually regained his amateur status.

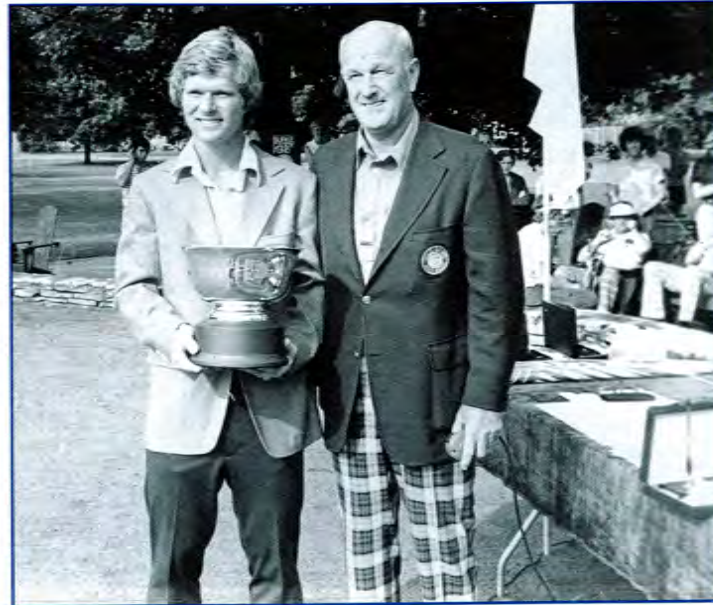
By 1943 Bob was back making noise on the local amateur scene. He teamed with partner Jack Sharp to win the inaugural Blythefield Invitational, a four-ball tournament that featured many of the best amateurs in the mid-west. In fact, the Kosten-Sharp team never lost a match from 1943-47, winning the event for five consecutive years.

In 1946 Bob's sales job with the Fram Corporation took him to Kansas City, Missouri when the company transferred him there. It didn't take him very long to make a splash on the amateur golf scene. In 1947 Bob won the Kansas City Amateur Championship, set the course record at Blue Hills Country Club with an eight-under par 65 and won the Blue Hills club championship.

In town for less than a year, Bob was already garnering headlines in the *Kansas City Star* and *Kansas City Times* which heralded this "comparative newcomer" as a favorite to win whenever he teed it up. And they were right. He lost in the finals of the Kansas City Amateur in 1948, but regained the title in 1949, the same year he was voted the Kansas City Golf Association Player of the Year.

Like all the great players, Bob always seemed to find a way to win. In previewing the final match of the '49

(continued on page 5)



Bob Kosten with 1976 Northeast Amateur Champion Bob Byman (continued from previous page)

two did not disappoint as they stood all square after the morning 18. The crowd that swelled to more than 3,000 people for the afternoon watched Kosten pull away to beat Allen 3-2 and collect his second State Amateur in as many years. Bob went on to successfully defend his New England Amateur title making him an astounding 20-0 in match play over the two year period.

In 1957 at age 41 Bob won his third and final State Amateur by defeating a 52 year-old Brad Oxnard, the state champ in 1928 and '32. Bob also qualified for the U.S. Amateur for his sixth and final time, and with his game firing on all cylinders New England sports writers predicted that Bob would make a run for the title at The Country Club. He played well up in Brookline, but was ousted in the third round of match play.

Perhaps the greatest Kosten-Allen dual occurred later that summer at Rhode Island Country Club. The two were pitted against each other in the New England Amateur final. Allen was dormie three in the scheduled 36-hole match, but Kosten won the final three holes to send the match to sudden-death where he won on the 38th hole.

"I guess that was our best match, at least it was for me," Bob recalled a couple of years ago. "I birdied the second extra hole to win." The dramatic win proved to be Kosten's last major triumph. He continued to play tournament golf into the 1960's, but he devoted more time to business and family, and became more content to just play on weekends. Bob's record in the New England Amateur is truly amazing. In his five appearances in the event he won three times and was runner-up twice.

Giving Back to the Game

Bob Kosten played in the inaugural Northeast Amateur in 1962, and again five more times through 1968. The tournament attracted many talented players from throughout New England though it aspired to be more than that. At the conclusion of the tournament in '68, RIGA Secretary Ed Perry asked Bob if he would like to take over as chairman. He enthusiastically accepted and immediately began to recruit national caliber players from the college and mid-amateur ranks.

The Northeast Amateur began to grow over the next four years with Bob as chairman. In 1973 Bob landed Ben Crenshaw, the marquee player who Bob knew would make headlines and give the tournament a boost. Crenshaw went on to win the tournament in record fashion, and from then on the tournament has grown to where it is now considered to be in the realm of the U.S. and Western Amateurs, due in major part to Bob Kosten.

Bob went on to serve as president of the Rhode Island Golf Association in 1977, and he later moved to Hilton Head, SC for several years. He and his wife, Rita, now live in Seekonk, and Bob still enjoys coming out to the Northeast Amateur and State Amateur to help in the scoring tent or just to watch some of the players in action.

What more can you say about a man who has been around golf for 70 years and won as many championships as he has? Maybe a simple headline that appeared in a 1949 *Kansas City Times* article said it best: "Bob Kosten A Winner."

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President's Message



Henry L. Richard, Sr.

I would like to say how proud I am to be president of the RIGA for the year 1999.

As you all know by now, "Joe Sr." has retired and, as of January 1st, "Joe Jr." has succeeded his dad as our new Executive Director.

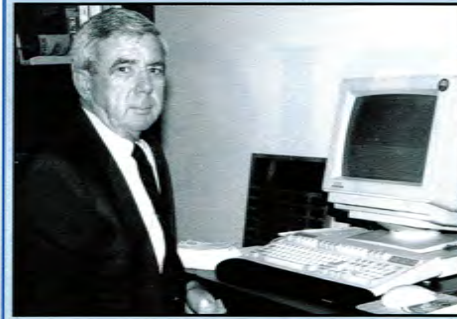
One further development is being announced in this newsletter. In late December, I called a meeting of our Operating Committee which is comprised of the President, 1st Vice-President, 2nd Vice President, Treasurer, Secretary, Immediate Past President and our Executive Director. At that meeting two issues were addressed and voted on. The first involved hiring an assistant for our Executive Director. That position was offered to Ron Treanor, a recently retired newspaper planning manager, who should fit nicely in what I call this "part-time, full-time" position. You can read more about Ron in the accompanying article.

The second issue voted on concerned the need for additional space for the RIGA office. It was brought to the Committee's attention that a small adjoining office next door to the RIGA office would soon be available. We agreed to rent this space as soon as possible.

I would like to bring one further item to the attention of all of our members and that is "slowness of play." We all understand that this is sometimes caused by weather conditions, fast greens, hole locations and so on, but under normal conditions we should be able to complete a round of golf in 4 hours or less.

We still have more than a month of winter ahead of us. Let's hope that we're led into an early, beautiful, warm spring.

New Tournament Director Ron Treanor



The RIGA has hired Ron Treanor as its new Tournament Director. Ron who had been the RIGA's Secretary and Representative from Lincoln Country Club will continue with those duties as well.

A graduate of Providence College with a degree in mathematics, Ron spent 39 1/2 years with *The Providence Journal* in the advertising department until his retirement in 1996. He spent his last 14 years at the Journal as Advertising Manager.

Ron has been a lifelong golfer and a member at Lincoln Country Club for 10 years. He grew up in Pawtucket and attended St. Raphael's High School. Ron caddied at Pawtucket Country Club and played for its team that won the State Caddy Championship in 1956. He and his cousin, Paul Treanor, also played together for several years in the State Four-Ball Championship.

Ron will work on a full-time/part-time basis at the RIGA. During the off-season he will work in the office where his computer skills will be a great asset. When the season gets underway Ron will work in all aspects of tournament preparation and administration. With the '99 season not far off on the horizon the RIGA feels fortunate to have such a qualified person as Ron on its staff.



RIGA Officers for '99: (L-R) Secretary Ron Treanor, 2nd Vice-President Don Clair, President Hank Richard, 1st Vice-President Dr. Doug Mellion and Treasurer Tim Harrington

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

It's still winter, but the new golf season is right around the corner. Somehow it never seems to really end anymore. I talk to more and more people who say they're playing golf right through the winter provided there's no snow on the ground. And with all the "silly season" golf events on TV, the game never seems to get too far out of sight.

As I begin my first year as Executive Director of the Rhode Island Golf Association, I am happy to report that the Association is in good shape, and we're planning for what we hope will be another enjoyable and exiting year of golf. We've added another tournament, the John P. Burke Memorial, which you can read more about on page 4 of the newsletter.

The Weekly Invitationals are going to be available in "packages" again this year. I think that many people took a wait-and-see attitude last year, but the packages worked well, and with a few adjustments that we made during the off-season, I expect the Weekly packages to be more popular in '99. Read more about the Weekly packages on page 3.

The one significant tournament change will be in the Father & Son Championship. Because of its overwhelming popularity in recent years in

terms of the sheer number of teams, it became obvious that change was necessary. Without addressing the situation we risked spoiling the tournament. For a first step this year, we are no longer going to allow a father to play with multiple sons on the same day. The tournament will be made up of strictly two-man teams. I realize that this will be unpopular for some people, but we had no choice. The tournament has become more of a "family day" than a golf championship in recent years, and again, with the overwhelming numbers it was the logical step.

The RIGA is still very much involved with the Button Hole short course. As in all projects of this magnitude, there are certain obstacles and hurdles to overcome, but the project is moving forward. There are only so many ways that a state golf association can help give back to the game, and I believe that Button Hole represents giving back to the game in the most meaningful way.

If you're one of those people who plays through the winter, keep swinging. If you're like me and put the clubs away when it's cold, it won't be long now. I look forward to seeing you at the course.

-Joe Sprague, Jr.

WEEKLY INVITATIONALS A CHOICE OF FIVE PACKAGES FOR 1999

The introduction of the weekly packages during 1998 was a huge success. The packaging proved tremendously popular with our membership because it eliminated the need to call for tee times on a weekly basis, tee times are now guaranteed throughout each package.

There are five packages being offered for 1999. Each package spans the entire season and we feel that they are equitable.

A foursome may request to purchase one, two, three, four or all five of the packages. We would like to assure that everyone sending in a request be granted at least one package, so to be fair, it is possible that we may ask groups who have signed up for all five to pass on a package. This may not be necessary, but please be aware that it is a possibility. The price for each package will be \$125⁰⁰ per person, \$500⁰⁰ per foursome - checks should be made payable to the RIGA.

Each foursome will designate its own Captain who will be responsible for coordinating arrangements with the RIGA office. Each package will be limited to 25 foursomes (100 players per day). You need to indicate Day (1st or 2nd) and time (Early: 7:30-8:30; Mid: 8:30-10:00; Late: 10:00-11:00). In effect, the Captain is reserving a tee time for a particular package. The four players need not be the same for each Weekly; that will be the Captain's decision. However, all players must be members of the RIGA.

If the Weekly is cancelled because of inclement weather or no carts available, a refund check of \$100 will be mailed immediately to the Captain of the foursome. If a player's home course is included in a package, a refund will be issued after playing the course.

The Captain of the foursome is responsible for completing the application correctly and forwarding a check for \$500⁰⁰ to the RIGA and listing the other three players, if known.

Because of the expected demand, every effort should be made to return the applications as soon as possible to reserve a tee time. Remember, first come, first served. The absolute deadline for receiving applications in the RIGA office is Wednesday, March 24.

All packages and tee times will be confirmed during the week of March 29-April 2.

If you have any questions, please call the office (272-1350).

WEEKLY PACKAGES

Package 1		Package 2		Package 3	
Quidnessett	April 19-20	Ledgemont	April 26-27	Rhode Island	May 3-4
Montaup	May 17-18	Potowomut	June 1-2*	New England	July 20-21*
Laurel Lane	June 14-15	Cranston	July 27-28*	Winnapaug	August 16-17
Wannamoisett	Aug. 31-Sept. 1*	Warwick	September 28-29*	Point Judith	September 20-21
Metacomet	October 4-5	Alpine	October 25-26	Kirkbrae	October 12-13*

Package 4		Package 5	
Misquamicut	May 11-12*	Pawtucket	April 12-13
Green Valley	June 21-22	Crestwood	May 25-26*
Foster	August 10-11*	Triggs	June 7-8
Valley	September 7-8*	North Kingstown	August 2&4*
Agawam Hunt	October 18-19	Sakonnet	September 14-15*

Please note: Not all Weeklies are Monday & Tuesday. Those marked with an * are scheduled for Tuesday & Wednesday with the exception of North Kingstown (August 2 & 4) which is a Monday & Wednesday

(Please clip or photocopy and mail to RIGA office by March 24 with check made payable to RIGA: Price per package is \$500 per foursome.)

PACKAGE 1 _____ DAY (circle one): DAY 1, DAY 2 TIME (circle one): EARLY, MID, LATE
 PACKAGE 2 _____ DAY (circle one): DAY 1, DAY 2 TIME (circle one): EARLY, MID, LATE
 PACKAGE 3 _____ DAY (circle one): DAY 1, DAY 2 TIME (circle one): EARLY, MID, LATE
 PACKAGE 4 _____ DAY (circle one): DAY 1, DAY 2 TIME (circle one): EARLY, MID, LATE
 PACKAGE 5 _____ DAY (circle one): DAY 1, DAY 2 TIME (circle one): EARLY, MID, LATE

Captain's name and club affiliation 1) _____
 Captain's daytime telephone number _____
 Other players in foursome (if known) & club affiliation 2) _____
 3) _____
 4) _____

Fleet to Sponsor Open in '99

THE RHODE ISLAND GOLF ASSOCIATION IS PLEASED TO ANNOUNCE THAT FLEET BANK HAS AGREED TO A THREE-YEAR SPONSORSHIP OF THE RHODE ISLAND OPEN. THE TOURNAMENT, WHICH HAD BEEN SPONSORED BY THE A.T. CROSS COMPANY SINCE 1992, WILL NOW BE KNOWN AS THE FLEET OPEN.

THE FLEET OPEN WILL BE CONDUCTED THIS SUMMER AT WANUMETONOMY GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB ON AUGUST 16-17. THE TOURNAMENT PROMISES TO ATTRACT ANOTHER STRONG FIELD OF PROS FROM RHODE ISLAND AND THROUGHOUT NEW ENGLAND. KIRK HANEFELD WILL BE ON HAND TO DEFEND HIS TITLE.

New Tournament for '99: John P. Burke Memorial

New for '99 is the John P. Burke Memorial which will be held at Newport Country Club and Wanumetonomy Golf & CC on Monday and Tuesday, May 3-4. Most people are familiar with the John P. Burke Memorial Scholarship Fund, but many may not know about the man behind the Fund that was named for him after his death in WWII at the age of 26.

Johnny Burke won the RI State Amateur four times between 1934-38 and the RI Open in 1936 and 1938. Burke, a lifelong Newport resident and member at Wanumetonomy, also won the NCAA individual title while a sophomore at Georgetown University. If not for his untimely death, Johnny Burke may well have become the first professional golfer of national prominence from Rhode Island.

The field at the 1st John P. Burke Memorial will be limited to 200 players - 100 players each day at each course - and there will be both "scratch" and "handicap" divisions. The so-called scratch division will be limited to 100 players with single digit home handicaps (0-9). The handicap division will be limited to 100 players with double digit home handicaps (10 and higher).

The "scratch" players and "handicap" players will each be playing to win their respective gross and net divisions with RIGA Player of the Year points being awarded to the top-15

players in the "scratch" division. A player cannot be playing in both divisions at once.

When filing an entry, players will be asked to check either "scratch" or "handicap." *All handicaps will be verified.* Because the state's top players are vying for one of three spots in the USGA State Team Championship, the top-30 (and ties) RIGA point leaders from 1998 will be guaranteed a spot in the tournament provided they meet the entry deadline.

The tournament will be set up similar to a pro-am in that a "scratch" player will be teamed with the same "handicap" player for two days. Their best-ball score will count for daily prizes as well as a two-day team prize. Each "team" will be paired with a different "team" each day, and all pairings for both days will be determined ahead of time to avoid confusion. Team pairings will be determined by the RIGA.

In effect, there will be three tournaments running concurrently - "scratch," "handicap," and "team net." The entry fee will be \$100 with \$50 being tax deductible as a donation to the John P. Burke Memorial Fund. After expenses, the RIGA plans to donate all the proceeds from the tournament to the Burke Fund which annually awards scholarships to young men and women from RIGA clubs who caddy, work in the pro shop or work on the grounds crew.

USGA Produces "The Spirit of the Game" Educational Program



PGA Tour Pro Peter Jacobsen gets a talking-to from a referee

The United States Golf Association has teamed with a number of well-known golfers, sports celebrities and actors to produce a video called *The Spirit of the Game*. It is part of an overall initiative to educate golfers - especially new golfers - about the need to protect the traditions of the game by always exhibiting proper behavior and respect for others on the golf course.

Arnold Palmer approached the USGA a couple of years ago and asked golf's governing body to take the lead in educating golfers about proper golf course etiquette. He was especially concerned with helping new players understand the responsibilities inherent in playing the sport.

The Spirit of the Game video is 53 minutes in length and is broken down into seven segments which address seven different topics: the teeing ground, pace of play, course condition, honesty & integrity, putting greens, walking & riding and manners & integrity. All the topics are addressed in a serious but playful manner which makes it fun to watch. A few of the sports celebrities who participated include Johnny Bench, Mario Lemieux, Jerry Rice and Bill Russell.

Complimentary copies of *The Spirit of the Game* will be distributed to USGA Members upon request. If you're not a USGA Member and would like to join, call at 1-800-345-USGA or visit the web site at www.usga.org.



(L-R) Bob Kosten, RIGA Secretary Ed Perry and Bobby Allen before their 1953 State Amateur Final
(continued from page 1)

K.C. Amateur, the *Kansas City Times* characterized Bob as "a long-ball hitter with a tremendous drive and come-back spirit. He was two down with three holes to play Thursday, but went birdie-eagle-par on the last three holes to win...If any one trait typifies the play of Kosten it is his boldness. This is particularly apparent from putts from four to six feet. He bangs them in with assurance and is seldom short from anywhere on the green."

Other golfing highlights of Bob's stay in K.C. include his being medalist at sectional qualifying for the 1948 U.S. Amateur. He made the quarter-finals of the 1948 Trans-Mississippi Amateur where he was defeated by reigning U.S. Amateur Champion Robert "Skee" Riegel who holed out a miraculous eagle two on the 18th hole to nip Kosten.

Also in 1948, Bob and a local club pro teamed up against four-time British Open Champion Bobby Locke and another local amateur phenom in a staged exhibition match which drew a gallery of 1,200. The match was halved, and Kosten's 69 was bettered only by Locke's 64.

In 1949, Bob was once again one of the principals in an exhibition match pitting Kosten and his Blue Hills CC head pro against Sam Snead and perennial national amateur stand-out Frank Stranahan. The event drew 2,000 people, and the match finished all square after Kosten birdied holes 14 and 15 to bring his side back from two-down.

On the Move Again

After three years of dominating the Kansas City golf scene, Bob was transferred by Fram again, this time to Omaha,

Nebraska. He didn't waste time showing his fellow Omahans the kind of golf he was capable of playing. Bob won the the 1950 sectional qualifying medal for the U.S. Amateur by five shots with rounds of 68 and 69, and finished runner-up in the '51 State Amateur.

Bob qualified for both the U.S. Open and U.S. Amateur in 1951. He eagled the second play-off hole in Open sectional qualifying to beat out three pros and gain the fourth and final spot. Unfortunately, Bob was unable to compete in the Open due to business commitments. Hogan won his third Open in four years at Oakland Hills that year with a winning score of seven-over par, 287.

Watch Out, Rhode Island

In January of 1952 Fram transferred Bob for a final time, this time to Rhode Island. Bob moved his family to Rumford and promptly joined Wannamoisett Country Club where his reputations as a great player preceded him, and where he would eventually win four club championships.

On July 7, 1952 Bob played his first competitive round in the R.I. Amateur at Pawtucket Country Club. All he did was shoot 68 to lead Al Faenza by two shots and Angie Santilli and Ronnie Quinn by four. *The Providence Journal* headline read "Newcomer Bill Kosten..." By week's end, however, everyone would be getting his name right.

Bobby Allen, Kosten's club mate at Wannamoisett and fellow worker at Fram, fired a 66 in the second round to gain the qualifying medal by two shots. Allen had won the State Amateur in 1949 and 1950, but now the Kosten-Allen era had officially begun.

Though Kosten and Allen worked for the same company and belonged to the same club, their golf games could not have been more dissimilar. Allen was the ball-striker while Kosten was the shot-maker. Often finding himself in trouble off the tee, Kosten's uncanny ability to recover combined with his deadly short game was usually enough to wear down even his most willing opponents.

The anticipated final match between Allen and Kosten never materialized as Allen was upset in the second round. Bob went on to beat 1948 State Amateur champ Fred Campanelli by a 2-up margin in the 36-hole final. Bob's easy smile and friendly nature immediately endeared him to the Rhode Island golfing public. In his acceptance speech Bob told the gathered crowd that in all the states and tournaments in which he'd played, he'd never had an ovation equal to the one he received on the 36th hole at Pawtucket.

Journal sportswriter Dick Reynolds put it best at the time: "Bob Kosten, by superb sportsmanship, modesty and golf genius has elevated himself from the status of an adopted son to that of a favorite son." Later the same summer Bob became the first Rhode Islander to win the New England Amateur leaving no doubt as to who was the man to beat.

The Big Showdown

The big showdown that golf fans had hoped for actually happened in 1953. Bob Kosten and Bobby Allen met in the State Amateur finals at Wannamoisett. The

(continued on next page)